

Milestones

# Swimart turns 35



Swimart's longest serving franchisee, Bob Tully, with his wife Julie at a function last year

Founder of Swimart and Waterco, Soon Sin Goh

This year, pool industry retail franchiser Swimart is celebrating 35 years in business.

Swimart was founded by Soon Sinn Goh, managing director of parent-company Waterco (three years after he migrated to Australia from Malaysia) starting in 1983 with a single retail store in Killara, NSW. Swimart has steadily grown into a successful franchise with 75 stores across Australia and New Zealand and a fleet of more than 220 mobile service vans.

Swimart franchise development manager Alex Johnson says Swimart is an agile, customer-focussed service-orientated company that works closely with their franchise partners to educate pool and spa owners about how to get the most from their investment.

He attributes Swimart's success to its long-standing franchisees such as Bob Tully, Reg Blue and Murray Lonie, who have been with the franchise for about 30 years.

Johnson says that over the years, Swimart has observed a number of trends.

These include an increase in demand for professional pool care services as pool owners become more time poor, as well as pool owners testing water quality more regularly – up to weekly or fortnightly compared with the previous twice a year.

They have also noticed chlorine sales dropping significantly as pool owners look towards alternatives to traditional sanitisation, and that automation and sustainability are now part of the conversation between retailers and customers.

## Long-time franchisees

Bob Tully of Swimart Campbelltown in New South Wales was formerly the store manager at Brian Archer Swimming Pools in Miranda, which was purchased by Swimart in 1984. Tully then became Swimart's first franchise manager, and he purchased the Campbelltown store soon after.

He says that Swimart provides its franchisees with fantastic marketing and advertising support, and is good at keeping up with product trends and technology.

"It's good to be part of a company that moves with the times," he says. "It's also good to have loyal customers, some of whom have been with us for more than 20 years."

Queenslander Reg Blue started working as Swimart store manager in 1989 before purchasing the Camp Hill franchise in 1995, which he still owns today.

He says that having worked as a manager in a Swimart franchise, he saw how successful the business model was, and so bought in.

"I believe the company's success comes down to a reputable brand, quality products and high-quality training and support," he says.

"Swimart has also been instrumental in educating Australian pool owners about water safety and healthy water."

## Key Swimart milestones

1980 – Soon Sinn Goh migrates to Australia from Malaysia where he worked in his father's civil engineering business which built reservoirs, water treatment plants and pipework for the Government of Malaysia

1983 – Soon Sinn Goh acquires land and property at 554 Pacific Highway, Killara and commences business as a retail pool store trading as Swimart Killara

1986 – Commences business as a franchisor

1987 – Welcomes first franchisee, John Pavett, at Miranda where he remained with Swimart until he passed away in 2017

1988 – Expands considerably by acquiring Swimworld Wholesale Pty Ltd, Swimworld Retail Pty Ltd and Poolquip Pty Ltd

2018 – Celebrates 35 years in business

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## Top five online news stories

The online stories that made the news over the past two months.

### Evolve looking for Poolrite investors

Evolve engaged its mergers and acquisitions team to seek a strategic investment partner to help Poolrite handle the envisioned long-term growth.

### DIY pool fence recalled nationally

Clark Rubber's DIY Be Safe Portable Pool Fence was recalled nationally following issues relating to opening the gate.

### Fluidra and Zodiac merger approved by local regulators

Neither Australian nor New Zealand regulators will oppose the merger of Fluidra and Zodiac.

### Building surveyor fined for incorrect certification of pool enclosure

A WA building surveying company and its sole director have each been ordered to pay a fine of \$2500 to the WA Building Commissioner.

### Dreamworld ride operators didn't know of emergency stop button, inquest told

Thunder River Rapids ride operators didn't know of an emergency stop button which would have shut down the ride within two seconds, an inquest heard.